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COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Progress report

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The activities of the secretariat to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of national communications are mandated by provisions of the Convention, decisions by the Conference of the Parties (COP) and requests by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) (see Article 8.2(c) of the Convention, decisions 3/CP.2 and 10/CP.2 and document FCCC/SBI/1997/6, para. 17).

2. This document contains a progress report on the activities undertaken by the secretariat since the seventh session of the SBI. Part II contains observations by the secretariat on initial national communications submitted by Parties not included in Annex I by 30 March 1998. Part III summarizes activities related to workshops and other meeting events, CC:FORUM, information exchange, training and other activities. Conclusions are drawn in part IV. In part V proposals for possible action by the SBI are made.

3. In order to provide the SBI with information as up-to-date as possible, the secretariat's customary table on the status of preparation of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties will be finalized in late May and presented as an addendum to this report (FCCC/SBI/1998/INF.3/Add.1).

II. OBSERVATIONS BY THE SECRETARIAT ON INITIAL NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

4. The SBI, at its seventh session, requested the secretariat to provide observations on the initial national communications submitted by Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention by 30 March 1998 (see document FCCC/SBI/1997/21, para. 13). The following observations are made:

(a) Seven initial national communications - those of Argentina, Jordan, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Korea, Senegal and Uruguay - have been submitted thus far;

(b) Some of these communications and their related executive summaries have been received in a limited number of copies. Some have not been translated into English, although such translation is encouraged in the guidelines contained in decision 10 adopted by the COP at its second session (decision 10/CP.2).

(c) The communications received broadly conform with the requirements of the guidelines contained in decision 10/CP.2. However, most of them appear to require further elaboration with regard to such elements contained in the guidelines as general description of steps, financial and technological needs and constraints and proposals of projects for funding. As regards the last-mentioned element, for instance, only one communication contains detailed information;

(d) Most of the communications appear sufficiently developed as far as the inventory parts are concerned. Four communications used 1990 as the baseline year for their inventory; three communications used the year 1994;

(e) All communications report on national circumstances and include elements listed in table I of the guidelines;

(f) Most of the communications contain information on programmes related to sustainable development, research and systematic observation, education, public awareness and training;

(g) In one case, no information on adaptation is provided. In another, information on adaptation and impact and vulnerability assessment will be provided through an addendum to the communication;

(h) All communications include programmes to mitigate climate change by slowing the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing sink capacity;

(i) Four national communications provide supplementary information regarding international cooperation and existing projects on climate change.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

A. Workshops and other meeting events

5. On the occasion of the seventh session of the SBI and of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) (Bonn, 20-29 October 1997), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), organized two workshops on initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties. Participants, including those from Brazil, the Central African Republic, Mongolia, Senegal and Sri Lanka, shared their experience in the preparation of the communications, and discussed technical problems encountered and solutions adopted.

6. A workshop was also held during the third session of the COP (Kyoto, 1-11 December 1997), where representatives from Argentina, Jordan, Mauritius, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Uruguay and Zimbabwe briefed participants on their activities in the preparation of the communications.

7. The secretariat attended the Climate Change Workshop on the Preparation of National Communications for the Countries of the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 20-21 November 1997. The workshop was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

8. The secretariat also participated in the workshop entitled "National Assessment Results of Climate Change: Impacts and Responses", co-organized by the United States Country Studies Program, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the governments of Japan and the Netherlands (San Jose, Costa Rica, 25-28 March 1998). This workshop, *inter alia*, expressed concern regarding the inadequacy of existing models for impact assessment and the limited availability of funds for impact and vulnerability assessments.

9. On the occasion of the GEF General Assembly, held in New Delhi from 1 to 3 April 1998, the secretariat organized a workshop entitled "National Communications from non-Annex I parties and Further Capacity Needs". During the workshop, representatives from the governments of Jordan, Mexico and Senegal presented summaries of these countries' communications. The meeting discussed problems and barriers encountered in the preparation of the communications and the needs for further capacity building.

B. CC:FORUM

10. The eighth meeting of CC:FORUM was held on 23 October 1997, at Bonn, Germany, in conjunction with the seventh sessions of the SBI and the SBSTA. CC:FORUM is an informal consultative group of bilateral and multilateral financial and technical cooperation programmes. It aims at coordinating the exchange of views on technical and financial support to developing countries and economies in transition for the implementation of the Convention and the preparation of initial national communications.

11. The meeting took stock of activities by bilateral and multilateral programmes in support of the preparation of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties. It also discussed new issues such as linkages among the Conventions. The meeting emphasized the need for further capacity building and the importance of continuing coordinating activities and improving information exchange.

12. On 2 December 1997, in conjunction with the third session of the COP, the secretariat also organized a presentation on CC:FORUM. Unlike other meetings of the Forum, this meeting was open to the public. It aimed at providing the audience with an overview of CC:FORUM objectives and activities, as well as raising delegations' awareness of the different bilateral and multilateral programmes that provide financial and technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties for the implementation of the Convention, as well as of the experience and needs of these Parties. Presentations were made by representatives of non-Annex I Parties, non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral programmes, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and implementing agencies of the GEF, as well as the secretariat.

C. Information exchange

13. Parties have continued to respond favourably to the secretariat's information activities in support of the Convention process. The secretariat continues to receive requests from Parties for copies of the CC:INFO/Web Tutorial Kit 1.0 on CD-ROM. This CD-ROM contains tools for governments wishing to develop a national Web site on climate change and the implementation of the Convention, including a step-by-step tutorial kit and key software. Through the CC:INFO/Web initiative, a network of sites for sharing information and ideas by and among Parties can be fostered. To date, 11 non-Annex I Parties have established national Web sites in collaboration with CC:INFO/Web (Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Jordan, Malaysia, Senegal, Seychelles, Thailand, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe), and another 34 have the Web site initiative included as part of the GEF projects for the preparation of their initial national communications (enabling activities).

14. The secretariat has put the full text of most of the national communications that have been submitted so far electronically on its Web site. At present, 28 first and 11 second Annex I national communications and four initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties are available. This project has received considerable support from Parties and is likely to become a useful resource to Parties which are preparing their initial national communications.

15. Through the UNFCCC site on the World Wide Web, information relevant to the intergovernmental process continues to be disseminated to an ever larger community of users. Information products include notifications to governments, pre-session and in-session documents, summaries and in-depth reviews of national communications from Annex I Parties, and updated information on country activities/projects which are included in the CC:INFO reports. The results of a questionnaire distributed during the seventh sessions of the subsidiary bodies and at the third session of the COP showed that over 50 per cent of the respondents rely on the Web site for obtaining official documents. Several requests were made for the documents to be available in United Nations languages other than English. The secretariat is actively exploring this possibility.

16. The secretariat has compiled the second edition of the *Who's Who in the UNFCCC Process*, a directory of more than 6000 delegates and observers who participated in the second session of the COP, the third session of the COP, or any of the subsidiary bodies sessions in between. The volume is intended to provide an up-to-date and user-friendly source of contact information.

17. Conscious of the fact that the World Wide Web is not universally accessible, the secretariat is publishing the third edition of its "UNFCCC Web site on CD-ROM". The novelty of this version is that it includes a searchable full-text index of all national communications available on the UNFCCC Web site, as well as all UNFCCC documents, up to and including the report of the third session of the COP. It also includes training material developed by CC:TRAIN. The production of both the *Who's Who* and the CD-ROM are being made possible by support from the Government of Japan.

18. A number of innovative and ground-breaking information activities were carried out by the secretariat during the third session of the COP. A special COP 3 Web site was set up, mirrored on three continents for easier world-wide access. This Web site included a number of special features, such as 'chat sessions' with delegates and observers on topics related to the Convention, and a real-time Internet broadcast of the third session of the COP, including translations into all United Nations languages. During the third session of the COP, the Web site (and the Internet broadcasts) were accessed from over 60 countries across the world. These broadcasts will be archived by the secretariat and made available via the secretariat's Web site. These activities were made possible through the collaboration and support of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the third session of the COP Information Support Committee of Kyoto, private sector companies in Japan brought together by Japan's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, and the Global Environment Information Center (GEIC, a joint project of the United Nations University (UNU) and the Environment Agency of Japan).

D. Training

19. CC:TRAIN is a UNDP-implemented project that supports the efforts of developing countries in various regions to implement the Convention, particularly in preparing their initial national communications. CC:TRAIN is funded by the GEF and bilateral donors, and executed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), in collaboration with the secretariat and the Information Unit on Conventions of UNEP.

20. CC:TRAIN has developed workshop and training packages aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to pursue the objectives of the Convention. Currently, six training packages are available. They include a "Workshop Package on Climate Change and the UNFCCC: Challenges and Opportunities (Version 2)", a "Training Package on Preparing a Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment", a "Training Package on Preparing a National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory", a "Training Package on Preparing a Mitigation Analysis", and a "Training Package on Preparing a National Implementation Strategy". In addition, the secretariat has commissioned CC:TRAIN to prepare a workshop package designed to inform national decision- and policy-makers of the guidelines for the initial national communications by non-Annex I Parties. All of the packages contain detailed information material such as transparencies, group exercises and speaker's notes needed to conduct technical training and/or awareness-raising workshops. All packages will be available in English, French and Spanish.

21. Two of the above training packages ("Workshop Package on Climate Change and the UNFCCC: Challenges and Opportunities (Version 2)" and "Training Package on Preparing a Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment") are available on CD-ROM and the CC:TRAIN library site (www.geic.or.jp/cctrain) developed in partnership with the Global Environment Information Centre (GEIC) in Tokyo.

22. Since the start of phase II, CC:TRAIN has accomplished the following:

(a) Helped establish climate change country teams in 19 countries, which oversee the preparation of their national communication and implementation strategy;

(b) Organized national workshops on climate change and the UNFCCC in 10 countries;

(c) Organized 9 regional and national training workshops where more than 140 participants were trained in preparing a national GHG inventory, mitigation analysis, and vulnerability and adaptation assessment; and

(d) Developed 6 training packages used in the 20 countries participating in CC:TRAIN and numerous other countries involved in the GEF-funded enabling activities.

23. CC:TRAIN is also now at a stage where it can organize cost-effective, high-impact training in the three regions where it is involved. CC:TRAIN's regional partners - Fondación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA), Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (ENDA), and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) - have established networks which can field regional experts to train in countries using the CC:TRAIN training packages. This mechanism is now in place and will be used to support the efforts of other countries not included in the CC:TRAIN project.

24. Furthermore, starting in June 1998, CC:TRAIN will begin a six-month certificate programme on climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessment for training specialists in these subjects. The course will be attended by approximately twenty participants representing ten countries benefiting from the Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme (PICCAP). This programme, initially available only to applicants from the Pacific region, will be carried out with the International Global Change Institute (IGCI) at the University of Waikato (New Zealand), in cooperation with the University of the South Pacific (USP) and PICCAP. The course will be transferred permanently to the USP in early 1999 and, depending on demand, to other regions as well.

E. Other activities

25. The secretariat continues to provide comments on the consistency of the GEF project proposals with the Convention and the guidance provided by the COP. The secretariat has also continued its participation in the GEF Operations Committee (GEFOP); the GEF Climate Change Task Force; quarterly review meetings convened by the GEF family to assess the status of preparation of national communications and progress in enabling activities; and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).

26. Since early 1996, the UNFCCC secretariat has been promoting the establishment of a proactive global arrangement for improving coordination of the existing assistance and providing additional technical support to developing countries in the preparation of their communications. This technical support programme is included in the GEF work programme approved at the latest GEF Council meeting.

27. Following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol by the third session of the COP, the secretariat has increasingly been called upon to provide information on provisions in the Protocol of particular interest to developing countries. These include Articles 10, 11 and 12, respectively on continuing to advance the commitments by all Parties under Article 4.1 of the Convention, on the financial mechanism of the Protocol, and on the definition of a clean development mechanism. The secretariat is developing standard information material that can be used at workshops, seminars and other events.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

28. Workshops and other meeting events gave non-Annex I Parties the opportunity to share experience in the preparation of communications, express concerns and make recommendations. They further provided an opportunity for the secretariat to contribute to those events, as well as to acquire a first-hand understanding of the technical and financial needs and constraints encountered by these Parties in the implementation of the Convention. The conclusions below reflect the findings of these workshops and other events, as well as the observations made by the secretariat contained in part II of this document:

(a) *The conclusions regarding initial national communications are:*

(i) Seven initial national communications have been submitted so far by non-Annex I Parties. Given the time-frame for the preparation of the communications envisaged under Article 12.5 of the Convention and considering that many developing countries ratified the Convention more than four years ago, there is a need to accelerate the preparation of these communications. Efforts by the various actors need to be sustained. In the context of GEF enabling activities, Parties must be able to avail themselves of 15 per cent of the total project funds, as provided for under expedited procedures, so that approved projects can rapidly start implementation.

(ii) Projects to prepare national communications should ensure that these communications fully conform with the guidelines contained in decision 10/CP.2;

(iii) Implementation of the GEF technical support programme for the national communication process needs to start without delay, as this programme can play an important role in ensuring timely completion of these communications and their conformity with the guidelines adopted at the second session of the COP;

(iv) Parties need to ensure that appropriate institutional arrangements are in place for carrying out the activities leading to the preparation of national communications. They should bear in mind that, if necessary, additional technical resources can be provided under the above mentioned GEF technical support programme and that relevant training material is available from CC:TRAIN;

(v) Provisions need to be made for ensuring that the initial national communications and their executive summaries where necessary are translated, reproduced and widely disseminated, including electronically.

(b) *The conclusions regarding needs at the national level are:*

(i) Specific national action plans and strategies for the implementation of the Convention need to be developed;

(ii) National institutional arrangements allowing for effective cross-sectoral consultation and inter-agency coordination should be strengthened, where necessary;

(iii) Awareness-raising activities, information material and public and media campaigns need to be improved. Parties should consider establishing national Web sites on climate change and the implementation of the Convention (see above, para. 13).

(c) *The conclusions regarding needs at the regional level are:*

(i) Methodologies for the inventory and mitigation measures need to be adapted to local (regional and subregional) conditions;

(ii) Models for assessing the impact of, and vulnerability to, climate change, and adaptation measures, particularly regarding socio-economic aspects, need to be adapted to local (regional and subregional) conditions;

(iii) Regional workshops, as cost-effective and efficient means for Parties to share experience, should be continued and be complemented by a series of thematic workshops;

(iv) Existing regional and subregional institutions and centres of excellence need to be strengthened so as to develop sufficient capacity to provide technical assistance.

(d) *The conclusions regarding needs at the international level are:*

(i) A forum for the exchange of experience in the development of emission factors and activity data for the compilation of the inventory needs to be provided;

(ii) Adequate financial and technical resources for information exchange and networking activities, including access to the Internet and the World Wide Web, should be provided to non-Annex I Parties (hardware and software);

(iii) A coordinated strategy and effective effort by the international community for the transfer and development of technologies for mitigation and adaptation is required;

(iv) Awareness-raising and other information material for policy and decision makers needs to be developed, including on the outcome of the third session of the COP and the Kyoto Protocol.

V. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE SBI

29. The SBI may wish to:

(a) Take note of the information contained in this document and in document FCCC/SBI/1998/INF.3/Add.1;

(b) In the context of the decision on guidance to the GEF, and bearing in mind the conclusions in part IV of this document, recommend to the COP specific guidance as necessary, including on the electronic availability, translation, reproduction and dissemination of the initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties.

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